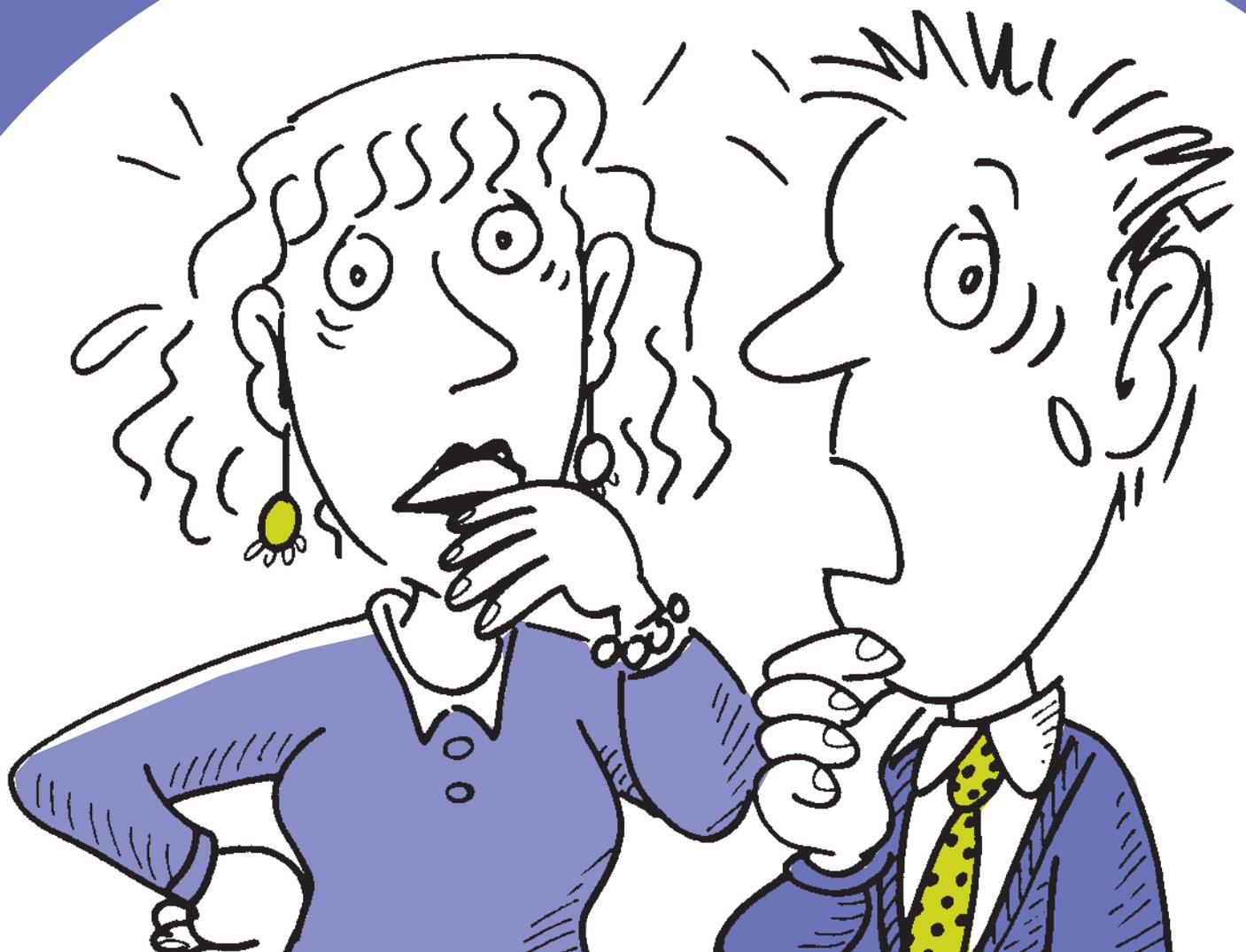


# NO ENGLISH

## Don't panic

A handbook for teachers of  
English as an additional language learners  
in their first few weeks at school  
in Australia





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# Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

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Many classroom teachers have little or no experience in teaching English as an additional language (EAL). *No English – Don't panic* has been written to help these teachers cater for newly arrived EAL learners in their classes.

Initially the task these students face in learning English may appear daunting to the students and their teachers. *No English – Don't panic* guides teachers in developing suitable programs and encourages them to realise that their good teaching practice is applicable to their EAL students. There are hints for helping students to settle in, and many practical strategies and ideas for use during their first few weeks in mainstream classroom settings.

Although the target group in this document is primary school students, many of the strategies would be appropriate for secondary students.

*No English – Don't panic* also suggests that the arrival in a school of students from a language background other than English can be the start of a positive and rewarding time for teachers and for other students. Sharing in developing a student's confidence and ability to communicate in English makes EAL teaching a uniquely satisfying experience.

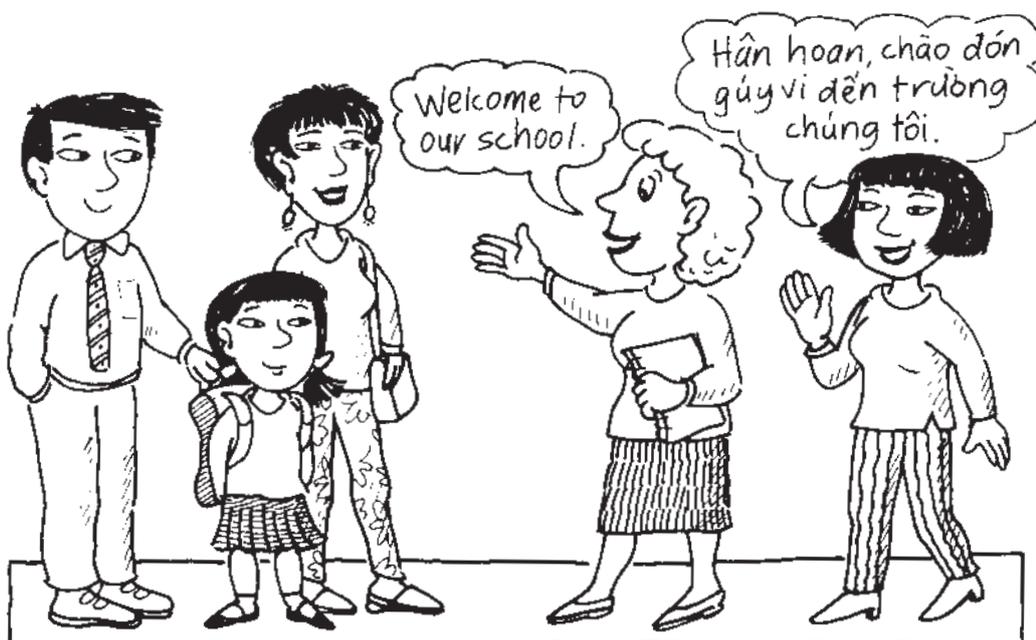
Note: *No English – Don't panic* is suitable as support material for students at the A1 (Beginner) and B1 (Beginner) Stages of the [EAL Companion to AusVELS](#)

# Enrolment and placement

## Enrolment

### Welcome the new family

- Try to put your new student's parents at ease by providing a warm welcome.
- For guidelines for the use of interpreting and translating services in government schools see [Accessing Interpreting and Translating Services](#).
- Avoid using students as interpreters, except in a real emergency.



### Seek background information

The first contact a school has with the new student's parents or guardians at enrolment is an important opportunity to collect as much information as possible about the student and their family. Your usual enrolment procedure will provide much of what you need to know about your new student, but in addition to this it is important to find out about your new arrival's language and learning history.

An example of an appropriate form for collecting additional background information about your student is provided on page 7. This form is included for printing on page 41 and 42 .

It is particularly important that classroom teachers know about the language and learning background of new students. The level of literacy your student has attained in the first language will influence subsequent language and literacy learning in English. Therefore, it is essential to find out how much schooling a new student has had in the country of origin and, if possible, the literacy level in their first language and in any other language in which the student may have been taught.

---

Remember that:

- some students arriving in Australia have not attended school before
- some have had interrupted schooling
- some may have attended school, but not have been taught in their first language.

It is also important to talk to parents and guardians about the main language your student uses at home. Encourage parents and guardians to continue to use that language as well as English with their child. Explain that it is important for the child's conceptual and social development to continue to learn their first language, with English as an addition, not as a replacement for it.

[First language assessment materials](#) are available to help assess students' literacy understandings if their first language is Arabic, Chinese, Khmer, Somali, Turkish or Vietnamese. Teachers who are concerned about the level of their new student's reading and writing in the first language will find this material particularly useful.

It is important to be sensitive in eliciting background information about your student. Some families' past experiences may make them uncomfortable about sharing information with strangers.

Consequently, background information may need to be built up over time, so it can be useful to schedule a further interview with parents or guardians to take place some time after the initial enrolment interview.

## **Refugees**

Refugees may have various additional needs, particularly when they are first settling in. Students and their families may have experienced trauma; they may be unsure about the fate of family members and friends; they may have few resources; and they may have had little access to education. Particular understanding is needed in these circumstances, as such students may take longer to:

- settle in
- begin to learn English
- make friends.

Be particularly sensitive in gathering information about past experiences, but explain to parents and guardians that it is important that you know about any experiences that may affect their child's overall happiness and feelings of security and self-esteem.

For information about assisting students who have suffered torture or trauma, contact [Foundation House](#).

Clarify the order of the name, pronunciation, and spelling, and also the name your student will be known by at school

If living with guardians, indicate relationship to the student

If not employed, note the occupation in home country

## Enrolment form for new arrivals

Date: / /

### Student details

Family name: ..... Sex: .....

Given names: (include pronunciation guide) .....

Date of birth: ..... Date of arrival in Australia: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: ..... Home telephone: .....

Country of birth: ..... Nationality: .....

Mother's/Guardian's name: .....

Father's/Guardian's name: .....

Father/Guardian's occupation: .....

Mother/Guardian's occupation: .....

Other telephone contact: .....

### Language background

	Language/s spoken	Languages read and written
<b>Father/Guardian:</b>		
<b>Mother/Guardian</b>		
<b>Student</b>		

### Student's educational background

Years of previous schooling: ..... School starting age: .....

Language of previous schooling: .....

Was this the student's first language?  YES  NO

Indicate whether schooling was continuous/interrupted/home tutoring. ....

Year level at time of leaving: .....

Date of last school attendance: .....

Has the student studied English before? .....

When and for how long? .....

**Family information**

Resident status (e.g. Refugee, Temporary or Permanent): .....

Other background factors that might affect the student's school life:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Position in family (e.g. 1st. child): .....

Brothers' and/or sisters' names and year levels: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

For example, dietary or dress practices

**Social**

Friends/relations within the school and the community

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Student's special interests

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Perhaps someone who could interpret in an emergency



Competency in English is not the same as cognitive ability or development.

## Placing students

Primary students should be placed in a class that is *appropriate for their age*. The English they will be hearing in lower year levels will not necessarily be easier for them, and the curriculum may not be appropriate for their age and interests. They may also find it harder to make friends among younger students.

### New Arrivals Programs

New arrivals are eligible to attend an intensive English language program at an English language school or centre. Students are deemed to be new arrivals if:

- They speak a home language that is not English and require intensive instruction in EAL.
- They have commenced instruction:
  - in the case of students entering the first year of primary schooling, within eighteen months of arrival
  - in the case of students entering all other years of schooling, within six months of arrival
- They have permanent resident status. Some students on temporary visas may also be eligible.

Principals should make parents or guardians of newly arrived students aware of their right to access new arrivals programs in English language schools and centres or in similar programs. Eligible students are entitled to intensive EAL instruction that aims to prepare them for participation in mainstream schools. Students normally attend an English language school or centre for six months.

For further information contact the Principal or Coordinator at your nearest [English language school or centre](#).

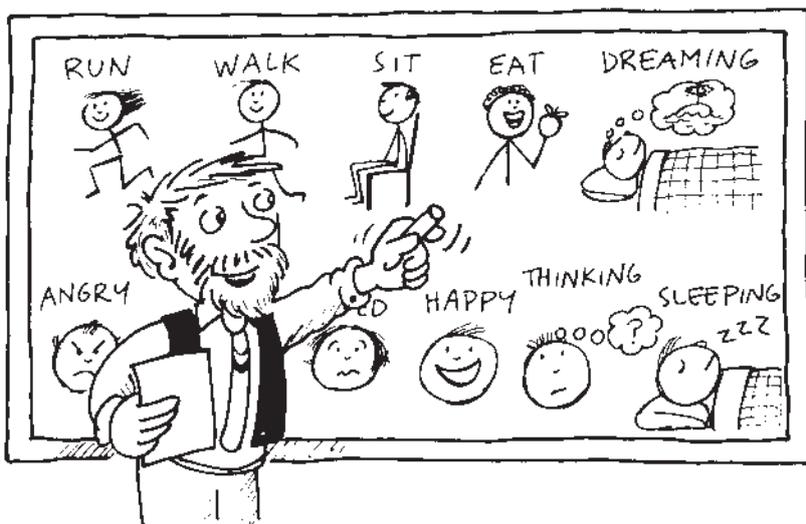
It may be helpful for you to visit an English language school or centre to observe their program.

# Getting started

## Settling in

- It takes **TIME!**
- Your student may not immediately start to use the new English that is being learned. There is likely to be a period during which your new arrival prefers to watch and listen. This is a natural and understandable response to a new situation and a new language.
- It is important, however, to get some form of *communication* going. Don't be concerned if it is non-verbal. The important thing is that you and your student are communicating. To get the message across, both you or your student can use:
  - gestures
  - pictures
  - miming
  - illustrations
  - sketches

Don't force oral communication.



- Value and accept all attempts by your student to communicate. Respond to the content of the communication, *not* the form.
- By responding in this way you will:
  - provide positive and encouraging feedback and correction, and value your student's attempts to communicate
  - pay attention to the meaning of the communication and not the form, so you will be responding genuinely to what you student is saying.
- In any communicative interaction your student will need *thinking time* to comprehend and then formulate a response.

Errors are a natural part of the process of language development. Provide **positive** and **encouraging** feedback and modelling.

- Remember, your student will understand more English than can be produced.



- Your student has already learnt at least one language and, therefore, knows a great deal about *how* to learn a language. Part of that process in both first and second language learning involves hypothesising the rules and structures of a language. Second language learners formulate rules for themselves in a way that makes sense to them. Any errors in this initial predictive language used by your student should be supported and not labelled as incorrect. *They indicate that learning is taking place.* For example:
  - rules of tense: *look – looked*, may result in *see – seed* being used
  - rules of plurality: *cat – cats*, may result in *mouse – mouses*



- Learning a new language is a long-term developmental process and it is likely to take from five to seven years for your student to become fully proficient in English. The rate of learning will vary depending on your new student's:
  - age
  - educational background
  - proficiency in their first language
  - self-confidence
  - previous teaching and learning styles.
- It will take time for your newly arrived student and parents or guardians to come to terms with the differences between schooling in the country they have come from and what they encounter in their new school in Australia. Parents, for example are often confused when Australian teachers provide various levels of class work for students in the same year level. Many countries work to a national syllabus, and may not cater for differing levels in the same way that is done in Australia. Other areas of difference may be:
  - school routine
  - homework expectations
  - teaching and learning styles
  - discipline
  - differing emphasis in curriculum areas
  - assessment procedures
  - the relationship between teachers and students.
- Initiate regular communication with the student's family by doing things such as sending home a photography excursion book and encouraging your new arrival to take school work home.
- While most students are likely to respond well to their new learning situation, it is important to understand that for some this will be quite a stressful time. The pressure of coping with a new environment, language and culture may result in extremes of behaviour from withdrawal to unfriendliness, and could include:
  - restlessness
  - loss of concentration
  - attention seeking
  - becoming involved in disputes or fights with other students
  - difficulties in focusing on the task
  - boredom, anxiety or depression.



- Try to avoid cultural misunderstandings that could result in embarrassment between yourself and your student by familiarising yourself with possible areas of misinterpretation. For example, in some cultures it is disrespectful to:
  - beckon with the open hand or with the index finger upwards
  - make eye contact with teachers
  - speak unless spoken to.

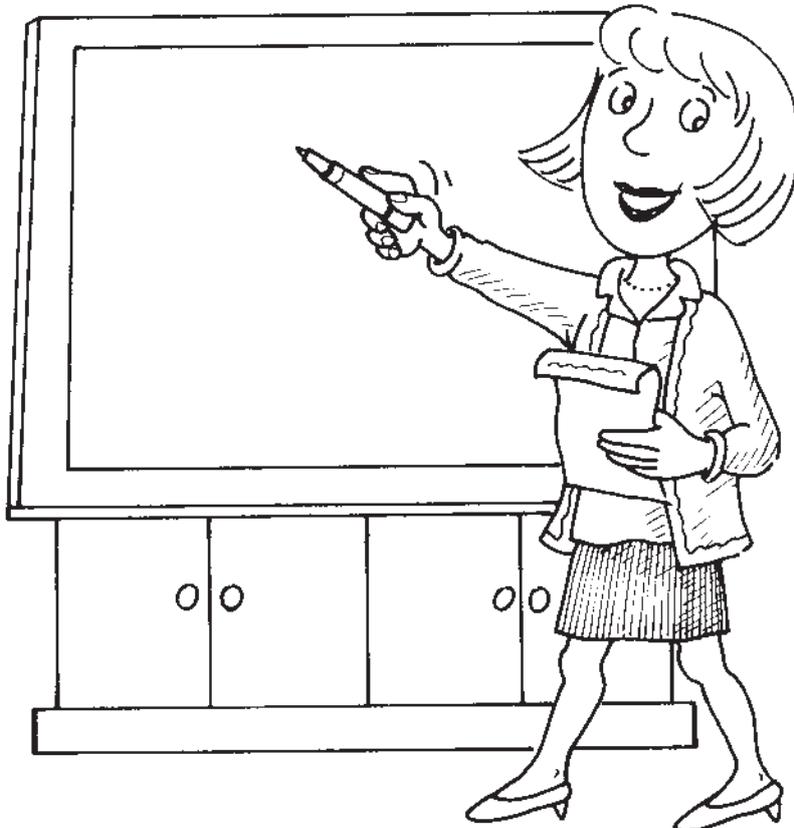


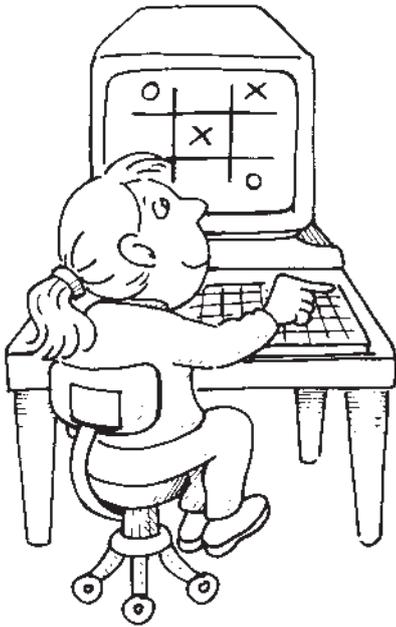
- Don't assume your student is at the same stage of conceptual development as the other students in the class. Variations may occur due to:
  - different school starting age
  - different beginning points to the school year, for example in September rather than February
  - disruption to education during resettlement
  - differences in the curriculum at their former school.
- Some parents/guardians may also be learning English, so may be able to assist their child as they learn English together. Others will not be able to directly support their child's English language learning, but will be able to play a vital role in their child's overall language and literacy learning by maintaining use of their child's first language. Research shows that this enhances second language acquisition. So, encourage parents and guardians to continue first language development in the home and to assist their child with English when they are able to do so.

## Teacher talk

You can help your new EAL student by observing the following points when speaking to them and the class as a whole:

- Speak at a normal pace. Don't speak too quickly or too loudly.
- Use clear, common, consistent instructions and repeat if necessary.
- Don't use too much jargon or too many colloquialisms.
- Use verbal cues or gestures to support talk.
- Don't overwhelm your student with too much talk. Speeches, and long-winded explanations with no non-verbal clues can confuse and discourage students who are struggling to understand, causing them to 'tune out'.
- Reinforce your oral instructions in writing where appropriate. This helps your student to see as well as hear the new language.
- Ask *real* questions and expect *real* answers.





## Classroom organisation

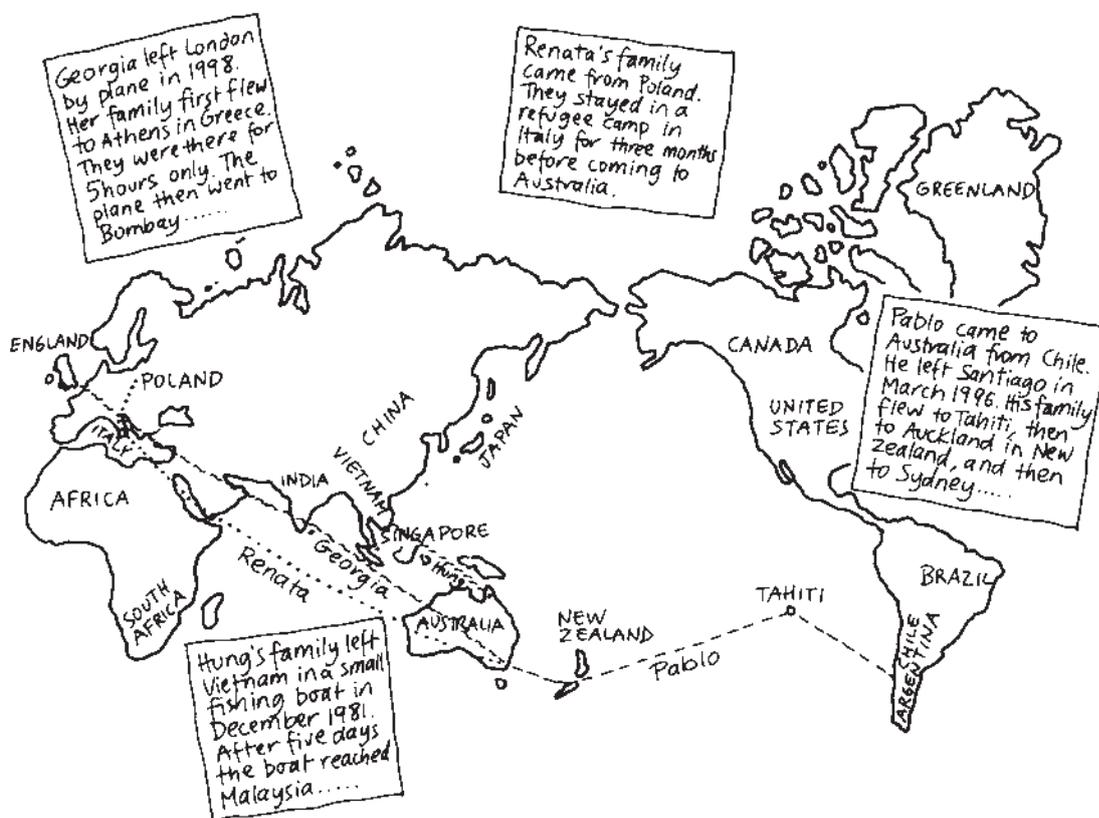
- *Don't panic!* A lot of your everyday classroom routines, organisation and activities will benefit your new student, although at this stage outcomes will not be the same as for the others in the class.
- The charts, pictures, book corners, games, listening posts and task centres that are part of your stimulating, language-rich classroom environment will promote incidental English language learning and encourage your new student to communicate.
- Opportunities abound in art, mathematics, science, music and physical education to involve your EAL student in meaningful activities, with social and linguistic benefits to be gained.
- Regular 'breathers' for your new arrival from high intensity oral work are essential to lessen anxiety and fatigue. Jigsaw puzzles, construction and art materials can usefully occupy a new student during these breaks.



## Involve other students

Most of the activities that your new arrival is involved in should be shared with other students. This will promote English language learning and help friendships to develop. By doing some of the following activities you will acknowledge your new student's first language and culture while helping the rest of the class react positively to the new student's situation and culture:

- Display a map of the world showing the route the new student took in travelling from the country of origin to Australia. This can become an activity for the whole class, with everyone researching their families' (parents/grand/great grand parents) countries of origin and the route they took to reach Australia.



- Teach some simple greetings in your new arrival's first language to the other students.
- Establish a *buddy* system within the class to help settle in the new arrival.
- Develop your new student's confidence and security by finding out if there are other students in the school with the same language background, and if so, arrange a meeting.
- Encourage all your students to share the responsibility of helping your newcomer settle in. They do not need to be able to speak the language of the new student to be able to do this.

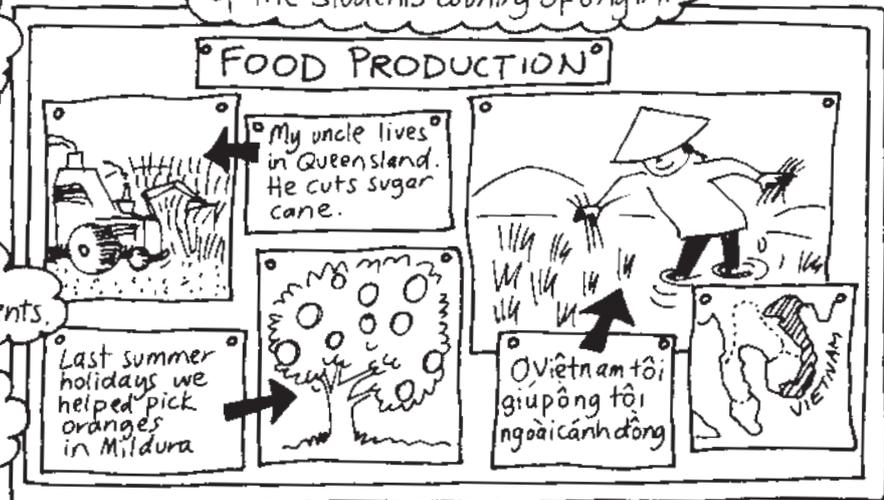
## OTHER IDEAS

Teach your students days, greetings, songs, numbers in your students' first language.

Read folk tales, stories from other countries, especially from the cultural background of your students.

If possible, label things in the room in English and your students' first languages.

Include on display boards, scenes of the student's country of origin.



## Assessing and monitoring EAL development

New EAL students' progress can be acknowledged and celebrated if the English they understand, and their success in using it for real communication is regularly assessed and monitored. Assessment will also help you to provide a well-rounded program for your new learner.

It is important to understand that your new student will follow a pathway of EAL learning that needs to be described in its own terms, rather than through material that has been developed for students who come to school already speaking English. In Victoria the [EAL Companion to the AusVELS](#) (known as 'the EAL standards') describes stages of EAL development. The EAL standards provide an overview of:

- the broad stages of English language development
- an outline of the major components of EAL curriculum
- a set of standards describing the expectations for EAL learners.

You can use the EAL standards to monitor and assess your student's EAL learning, and to help you to talk about progress in English language learning when reporting to parents.

The EAL standards describes development through the strands of:

- Speaking and listening
- Reading and viewing
- Writing.

---

## Where do I start with the EAL standards?

Teachers of students in Years P–2 should read Stage A1.

Teachers of students in Years 3–6 should read Stage B1.

Teachers of students in Years 3–6 who have had little or no prior schooling should read Stage BL.

You are likely to begin to see some progress, in EAL standards terms, fairly quickly. However, remember that the descriptions given apply to the end of stages, so they describe a point your student is likely to reach after learning English for some time.

## Assessment strategies

There is a strong emphasis in the EAL standards on ‘communicative’ use of English; that is, on the way in which students use their developing English to exchange real meaning in real situations.

Assessing this kind of development is best done through ongoing observation of your student’s interaction in a variety of situations.

You may like to do some informal testing of the English vocabulary that your student is learning, but remember that the way in which your student uses this vocabulary in real situations will tell you as much, if not more, about the progress that is being made in English language learning than a test ever can.

Using a range of strategies and contexts to monitor development is the best strategy of all!

# Teaching English

This section gives an overview of the initial English your student needs in order to feel secure and confident in the new school environment.

Include your new arrival as much as possible in mainstream classroom activities, but set aside at least 20 to 30 minutes a day for some form of direct teaching, with a specific, planned language activity.

There is no one text or single course that can be used to teach your students English.

Remember that a lot of initial English is best taught incidentally in context. For example, teach the word 'playtime' when the bell rings signalling playtime. Encourage your English speaking students to teach new arrivals everyday English as the need arises during daily routines.

*There is no particular order for presenting the suggestions you will find below.*

## Classroom instructional language

Your EAL learner needs to understand your instructions in order to know what you expect. This means you need to be clear in your own mind about what you expect and how you are going to convey this to your new student. Instructions should be clear and brief. Use gestures and as much natural expression as possible.

At first use similar language for the same purpose, for example:

*Mon – Pack up time!*

*Tues – Time to pack up!*

*Wed – Pack up now!*

Rather than:

*Mon. Pack up time!*

*Tues. Time to put things away!*

*Wed. Clear up this mess!*

Use known vocabulary to teach new concepts and use known concepts to teach new vocabulary.

Your student will understand this type of English better if you:

- make the situation meaningful and the context clear
- give your student lots of opportunities to hear the language
- give appropriate feedback as to whether your student is gaining the correct meaning from the situation.

Some useful instructional language includes:

- |                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Again.                       | Open the door/book.  |
| Bring me...                  | Point to...          |
| Come here/in.                | Put the/it...        |
| Do this/that.                | Put your hands up.   |
| Don't do that.               | Quickly/Slowly.      |
| Find a partner.              | Quietly.             |
| Finish.                      | Run.                 |
| Get...                       | Say...               |
| Give me...                   | Show me.             |
| Go back/over there.          | Shut the door/book.  |
| Go to the door/window/table. | Sit down!            |
| Go to the toilet.            | Stand up!            |
| Listen!                      | Stop! Take...        |
| Look at...                   | Walk!                |
| Look here.                   | Wash your hands!     |
| Make a line/circle.          | Where's your/the...? |
| Make/Stick/Cut...            |                      |





How can I teach them to say what they like or dislike?



## Interpersonal English

Your new student needs English to function at an interpersonal level with you and the rest of the class. The following areas cover some of the English language items that will be most useful and might put you in mind of other equally common expressions to add under the various headings.

### Personal information

My name is...; I come from...; I'm ... years old.

### Greetings

Hello! How are you? Hi! Good morning/afternoon/night.  
Fine thanks. Very well. Good.

### Farewells

Good-bye! Bye! See you later.

### Requesting

Can I/May I ...? Yes you can./No you can't. Where's the ...?  
When ...?

### Apologising

Sorry. I'm sorry. That's OK/All right. Don't worry.

### Agreeing and disagreeing

Yes I do. No I don't. Do you ...? That's right. That's wrong.

### Likes and dislikes

Do you like ...? Yes I do. No I don't. Very... Not much.

### Asking for help

Excuse me. Can you ...? Do you understand?  
I don't understand.

### Politeness

Pardon. Please. Thank you. Thanks. That's all right/OK. Excuse me.

## Specific vocabulary

Even while becoming familiar with classroom and interpersonal language, your student will also need to learn some basic vocabulary for communication. Specific vocabulary introduced should match your student's rate of learning and interests, and any current classroom themes or topics.

Your student's rate of initial development and long-term retention of this language will depend on how often it is subsequently used. This, in turn, will depend on your student's interests, need to communicate, and confidence in communicating.

Don't be discouraged if your student:

- seems to forget something that appeared to be known yesterday
- fails to use a well-known word or phrase when the situation calls for it.

This is quite common; and tomorrow your student may be able to recall it again! *Gentle prompting will help in these situations.*

Remember all students are likely to understand more than they can express.

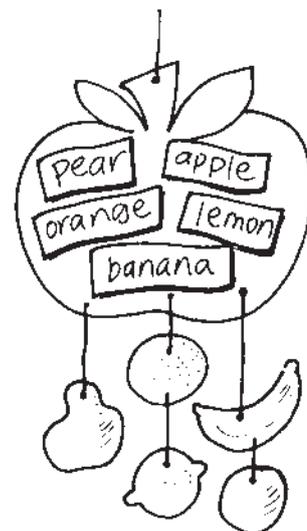
Vocabulary is best presented within a theme, a topic or some other focus, such as concepts.

## Themes

Some initial areas to focus on in providing your student with useful vocabulary items are listed under the headings below. They are simply suggestions, as you will need to adapt the language to the age of your student and what you feel is most appropriate to the themes and topics that the rest of the class is studying.

### Self and family

<i>How I look</i>	Body parts: eyes, ears, hand ... Clothing: shoes, jeans, hat ...
<i>Things I can do</i>	Write, draw, play, read, walk, run, think, understand ...
<i>The way I feel</i>	Sad, happy, angry, scared, sick, hungry, thirsty ...
<i>The food I eat</i>	Apple, orange, sandwich, cake ... Breakfast, lunch, dinner, playlunch ...
<i>My family</i>	Mother, father, sister, brother, grandmother/father, aunty/uncle ...



## The school environment

*In the classroom* Ruler, pen, pencils, book, blackboard, table, chair, picture ...

*Around the school* Playground, school crossing, rubbish bin, toilet, art room, canteen, office, library ...

## Weather

Cold, hot, wet, wind/windy, sun/sunny, rain/raining, cloudy, summer, winter, autumn, spring...

## Money

How much? Dollars, cents ... Cost/price ...

## Colours

Red, green, blue ...

Light, dark ...

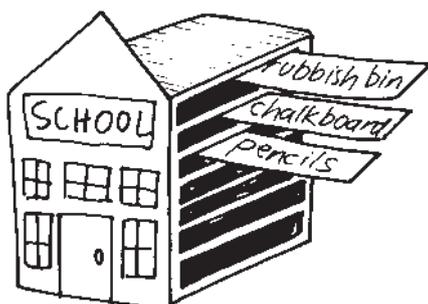
## Numbers

1 to 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 1000 ...

First, second, third ...

## The alphabet

Names and sounds from A to Z.



## Concepts

Depending on age and experience, your student may already have a good understanding of many concepts and may only need to learn the equivalent English vocabulary. The suggestions below are provided as a guide.

### Position

On, in, next to, out, top, bottom, inside, outside, between ...  
To the left/right, straight ahead ...

### Size

Big, small/little, long, short, very ...

### Shape

Circle/round, square, triangle ...

### Quantity

Lots (of), some, more, less, full, empty ...

### Comparison

Same, different, bigger than, smaller than ...

### Time

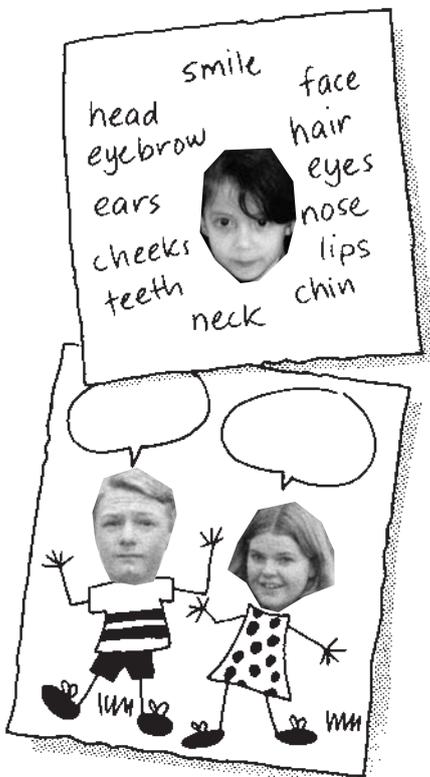
O'clock, finished, before, after, next, now, later, yesterday, today, tomorrow, playtime, lunchtime, hometime, morning, afternoon, months of the year, days of the week ...



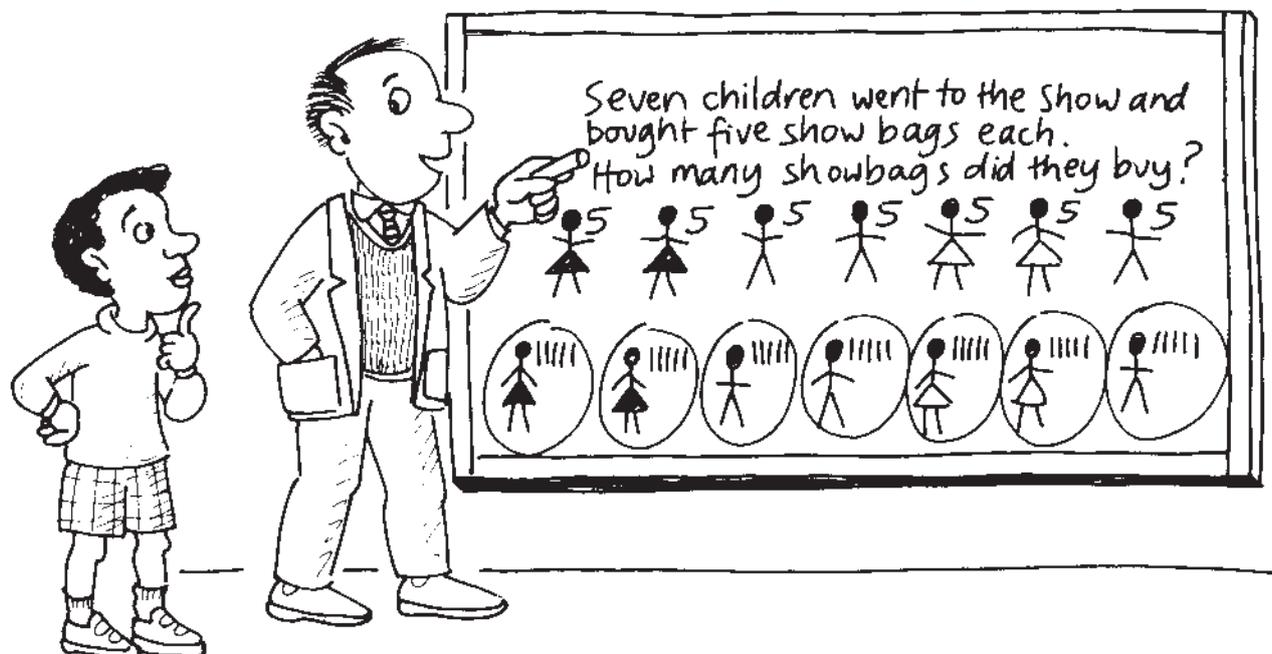
# Everyday things to do

Constantly recycle and reinforce newly learnt English.

- Include a wide range of initial activities or experiences that focus on oral English and that provide your student with opportunities to hear the new language, for example:
  - shared book readings  
(use well-illustrated stories with lots of repetition)
  - games such as bingo and lotto
  - chants
  - rhymes
  - songs
  - story recordings
  - role-play/drama.
- Your student needs to see as well as *hear* English. Fill your room with print of all kinds to help your student tune into the written conventions of English.
- To facilitate maximum interaction in a low-stress environment with a range of language models, make use of:
  - small-group work
  - pair work
  - peer-group/cross-age tutoring.
- Try to ensure that the activities you provide give rise to real communication where the meaning is predictable.
- Use highly visual, concrete materials and direct experiences to teach and clarify concepts: a picture is worth a thousand words! Materials such as the following provide important cues and act as prompts:
  - graphs, diagrams, charts, posters
  - students' own art work
  - photographs
  - models
  - digital learning objects.



- It is important that your student understands what is required in any task or activity. Model or demonstrate part of the activity and let the student continue.



- Set achievable goals that ensure success. It's a good idea to do some follow-up tasks that will show *how much* your student has understood.
- Students who are literate in the first language can be encouraged to do some work in that language. This will promote self-esteem and reassure your new arrival that previous knowledge and learning experiences are valued. Texts that your student writes can be translated into English. Enlisting the help of an advanced bilingual student is also a good strategy.
- Everyday objects, such as keys or money, can be used to support the learning of structures and of concepts such as spatial relations. Keep a resource kit of useful items such as:
  - sets of balls
  - toy cars
  - plastic shapes
  - pieces of material, paper, wood and so on in different textures and colours.
- Encourage older students to keep a glossary or dictionary of words and meanings. Your student may like to record definitions in their first language, or may be able to make use of a bilingual dictionary.
- A selection of simple picture dictionaries is vital for student reference and to help in emergencies.

- Learn to make quick sketches to convey meanings. Use graphics and illustrations to support any 'chalktalk'. (A useful resource for sketches is *1000 pictures for Teachers to Copy*, Wright, A., Thomas Nelson and Sons, London, 1993.)
- Find out from the enrolment form what your student's particular interests and talents may be, for example, music, sports or hobbies. Use these interests as stimulation for oral and written expression. Writing and talking about oneself can be a good starting point.
- *Don't cause language overload!* If you sense that your student is becoming frustrated or is tuning-out, it may be because they are feeling overwhelmed. A break or a change of activity, perhaps to something that is well-known, will help your student to regain confidence.

**To ensure growth in learning English, new students must learn through:**

- *exposure*
- *need to communicate*
- *opportunities to use the language*
- *demonstrations of what is expected of them*
- *engagement in tasks*
- *feedback on their progress*
- *experimentation with language.*

**You will need to:**

- *be patient*
- *use repetition*
- *use praise*
- *build self-esteem*
- *focus on communicating.*



## Reading

As EAL students learn to speak English, their ability to read English will also develop. The rate at which this development occurs is likely to depend on their:

- age
- literacy skills in their first language
- whether or not they have already learnt a script that is different from English, and consequently need to learn a new script to read English.

Your student will be able to transfer some of what is already known about reading in the first language to learning to read in English, but will still need to learn some, if not all, of the following:

- new sounds and how they are represented in English (and learn that the same sounds may be represented by different letters or groups of letters, or that the same letters may represent different sounds in different words)
- new stress and intonation patterns, which may carry different meanings
- new conventions in the presentation of texts, and the organisation of information in texts
- new culturally specific reading values and behaviours.

When learning English your new student may also need to learn a new script. Therefore the following understandings about English may also need to be learned:

- that English uses a phonetic writing system, rather than a syllabic or pictographic system
- how sounds are represented in English
- new conventions, such as reading text from left to right, and turning pages from right to left.

It is important to keep in mind that for most EAL learners there is a close link between what they are able to talk about in English, and what they are able to read and understand in English.

New students are likely to understand more of a text if they hear it read aloud than if they try to read it themselves. The stress and intonation will help to communicate meanings that the written words alone cannot convey. Therefore, read new texts to your new students before asking them to read them for themselves.

Read to your students every day – teacher modelling is very powerful.

Oral interaction is of great importance in learning to read.

Remember that older students often become familiar with the letter-sound cues of English very quickly, and can read fluently and with some expression. However, be aware that in such cases comprehension will be quite limited, due to a limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary.

Older students may initially be reluctant readers; feeling self-conscious and fearful of making errors. Overcome this by providing an environment in which your student feels comfortable to 'have a go'.

### Choosing reading material

- There may be a shortage of literature appropriate to your student's interests and maturity. Provide as wide a range as possible of high interest materials from which your new arrival can select. Provide materials with:
  - lots of rhyme, rhythm and repetition
  - predictable story lines and straightforward themes
  - clear, comprehensive illustrations
  - grammatical structures that match everyday spoken English.
- When choosing reading materials consider:
  - picture storybooks
  - big books and books that you have used with the whole class
  - factual materials that reflect the experiences, knowledge and interests of your students
  - 'wall' stories, experience books and other materials produced in class that use natural language with which the students are already familiar
  - selections from reading/literature schemes and books that contain thematic or high interest material at an appropriate level, for example, *WiggleWorks*, *Cambridge Reading* (Scholastic); *InfoActive* (Longman); *Foundations* (Macmillan)
  - bilingual books, first language books.

Use meaningful print in your student's immediate environment to provide a stimulus to reading, for example, signs, labels, charts, posters, instructions, songs, rhymes.

## Strategies and ideas

Each day your program should involve your new student in a number of different reading experiences. You will find the following suggestions helpful:

- **Pre-reading activities:** these familiarise the student with content, vocabulary and language patterns before introducing the text. Activities such as matching new vocabulary to illustrations, or talking about a picture on the same topic as the new text will ensure that students are more likely to succeed with new material.
- **Recorded reading:** recorded texts produced in the classroom or popular published texts such as big books, rhymes or chants, allow control over what is being read, in that your new student can read at a comfortable pace, pause and re-read passages, and listen any number of times.

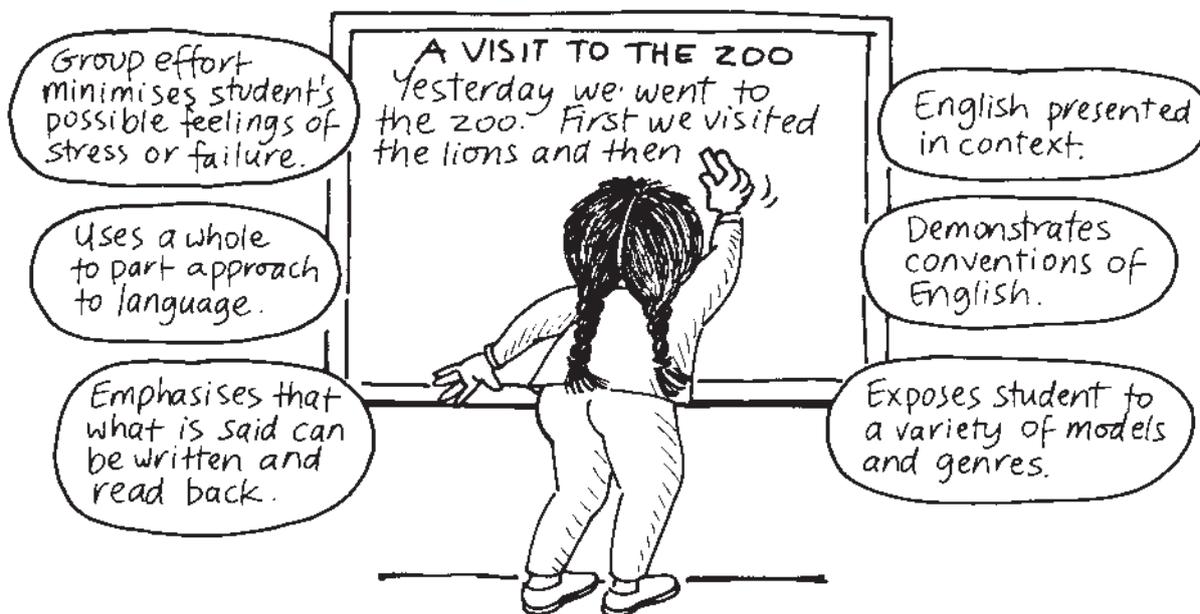
Do not expect your student to independently read text that is unfamiliar.



- **Wordless books:** stories can be built up from books containing sequences of pictures or photographs. They can be commercial productions or ones made in the classroom.



- **Wall stories:** simple retellings of stories, excursions, or classroom activities recorded on large sheets of paper or the chalkboard, and used as reading material.



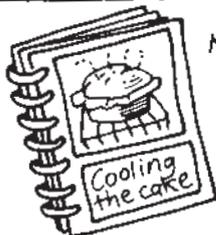
- **Big books:** enlarged versions of favourite reading materials. They can be commercial productions or ones made in the classroom.



- **Reading together:** the student reads aloud along with the teacher or a student who is a good reader, while the teacher or good reader tracks under the words. Use favourite stories or interest-based books.

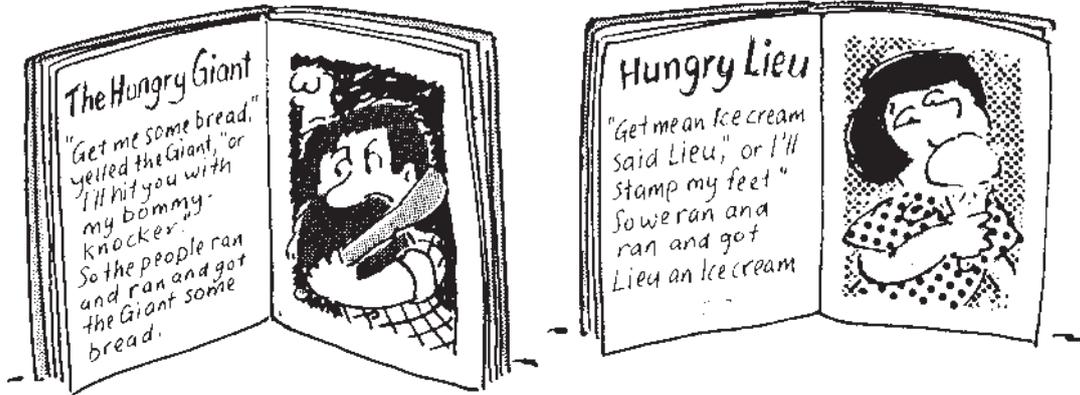


- **Picture sequencing and sentence matching:** provides a means of retelling by the correct ordering of a series of pictures or photographs and sentences about activities such as cooking or science experiments.



NB: if you use a loose leaf plastic folder, the photos/sentences can be re-jumbled for later use by students.

- **Class big books:** class stories based on the sentence patterns of familiar books (innovate on the text). Use folktales, fairytales, fables, favourite stories, rhymes, jazz chants or songs.



- **Cloze exercises:** heighten syntactic, semantic, positional, directional and visual awareness. Words can be deleted according to any predetermined criteria, for example:

"Yesterday we went to the park to fly kites."

CONTENT WORDS (SEMANTIC)  
places | people | things  
actions

STRUCTURE WORDS (SYNTACTIC)  
prepositions | pronouns | articles  
conjunctions

Yesterday we went to  
the \_\_\_\_ to fly kites.

Yesterday we went to  
\_\_\_\_ park to fly kites.

LETTERS (GRAPHOPHONIC)

Yester\_ay we went to  
t\_e park to \_ly kites.

PICTURES

Yesterday we went to  
the park to fly ~~to~~ ~~fly~~ ~~kites~~.

- **Repeated readings:** develop confidence and understanding through ample and varied practice.

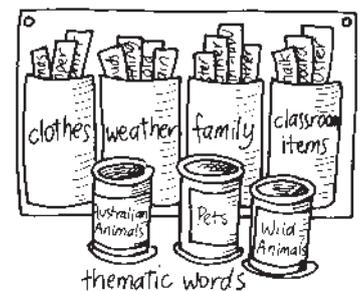
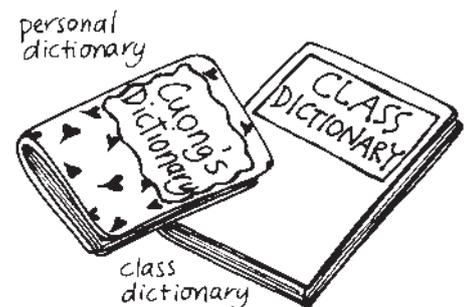
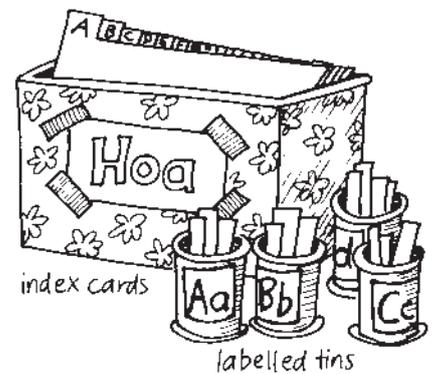
## Writing

Like learning to read in English, learning to write in English has strong links with learning to speak English. EAL students need to learn about the way English works in its written form, which, as with reading, means working out how the language operates at the sound–letter and grammatical levels, as well as learning new English words.

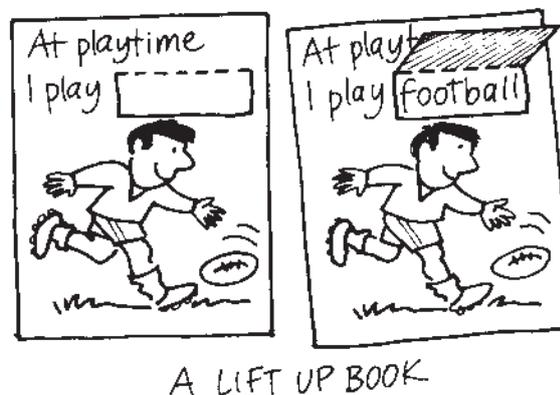
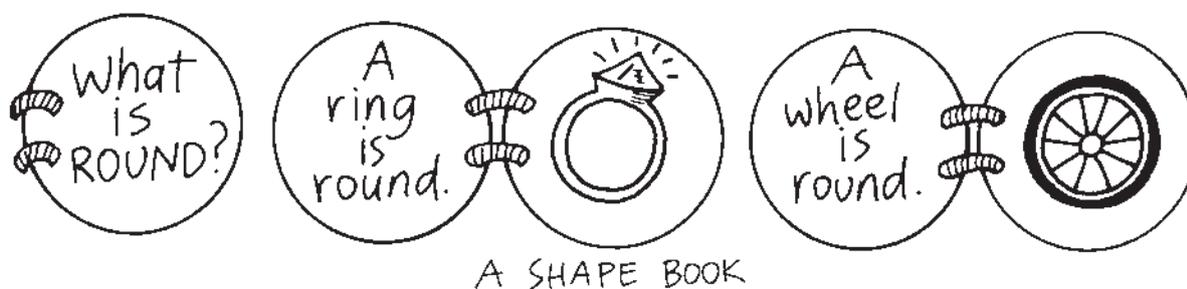
Students will also need to learn how writing changes in English to suit different purposes and audiences. This all takes time, but right from the first day your student can begin to write simple messages and ideas in English, using classroom models.

### Strategies and ideas

- Encourage students who are literate in their first language to write initially in that language, for example by keeping a daily diary.
- Use parents or other students, if this is possible, to translate what your new student has written in the first language for publication in both the first language and English. This writing can then be used as a reading resource or it can be recorded for your student to listen to.
- Encourage your student to draw. This gives a valuable means of self-expression and communication. Expand on whatever information your student is able to give you about the drawing, and write words or sentences about it.
- Help your student to overcome any apprehensiveness about making mistakes in writing in English by responding to the content, not the form of first attempts. When correcting, focus on one aspect of the writing, such as the spelling or a particular grammatical structure.
- Composing text on the computer means that errors can be easily corrected, and a clean copy printed for your student to keep.
- Model writing to demonstrate the process and to familiarise your student with the conventions of English script.
- Accept the handwriting of older students who have already developed a legible style.
- Give students changing from a different script, such as Chinese, Lao, Khmer, or Arabic, a lot of practice and guidance in writing English script.
- Encourage your student to develop strategies for finding the words needed in their writing. Try personal dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, word charts and word banks.



- Encourage writing by publishing your student's texts in innovative ways. Use pop-up books, folding books, shape books, flap books.



- Remember that a process approach to writing may be new to your student, who may consider that correctness is the most important criteria when composing a piece of writing. Your student may:
  - prefer to be told the correct way to spell a word, rather than attempting to spell it
  - tend to model writing on what others do, for example by copying words or passages from books
  - repeatedly write on the same topic.

Each child's experiences should be valued and supported – build on these.

Using these strategies allows your student to produce writing even when at early stages of EAL development. At such early stages of writing development, these strategies should be accepted, but you should provide models that will show your student other ways of doing things.

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## Pronunciation

EAL learners may experience difficulty in hearing and producing certain English sounds that do not occur in their first language. They will probably transfer sounds from their first language that they perceive as approximating the English they hear. As a consequence of this they will do such things as substituting 'd' for 'th', or 'v' for 'w'. Stress, rhythm and intonation in English will also differ from their first language.

You may notice that your new student has difficulty with:

- some vowel sounds
- some single sounds, for example, t/l/th/z
- some consonant endings, for example, ed/s/z/t/d
- some initial, medial, or final clusters, for example, bl/st/str/sk/ts
- some words of more than one syllable
- some pairs of words that contain two readily confused sounds, for example, ship/sheep, tree/three.

Don't panic. It is unlikely that your student has a speech problem. The difficulties being experienced are most likely due to a lack of exposure to English, and lack of experience in using it. Your student will become more proficient in pronunciation as they become more familiar with the new language as a whole.

If difficulties with some sounds are making it hard for you to understand your student, initially concentrate on helping with those sounds that most hinder communication.

Elements of pronunciation such as phrasing, pausing, stress, pace, emphasis, rhythm, tone and volume are best covered through speech and movement, rhymes, poetry, role-play/drama, and general exposure to English.

Learning the sounds and intonation of English is a long-term process. Your student will find the following support helpful:

- Provide many opportunities for natural talk, such as pair work, group work and everyday classroom interaction.



- Find time to develop listening skills through a variety of activities. Students need to 'tune in' to the English language before they can produce it accurately.
- Listen carefully, identify the sounds in need of attention, and demonstrate how these sounds are formed, for example the tongue position, lip position and mouth shape.
- Provide opportunities for practice, through rhymes, jazz chants, songs or tongue twisters. Choose materials suited to your student's maturity and development.

# Mathematics

Although new students will need to learn the language of mathematics in English, their computational skills and mathematical understanding may be at the same standard as the rest of the class, or possibly more advanced. Mathematics is one learning area that your student can experience success in without using a great deal of English.

Your student may have learnt mathematics in a traditional way with an emphasis on rote learning and computational skills. If this is the case, your student may lack experience in transferring these skills to problem solving and relating mathematics to real life situations.

Overcome this by giving ample opportunities to use concrete materials and to develop skills such as estimation.

## Setting out

Accept and make an effort to understand different methods of setting out that your student may use. Later you can teach common classroom methods of setting out mathematical problems.

## Symbols

Be aware that your student may use some mathematical symbols that are different from those used here, for example, the use of a comma for the decimal marker. Many mathematical symbols are universal, including  $+$   $-$   $=$   $\neq$ . Point out the differences in the way things are done in Australia, perhaps by helping your student make a classroom wall chart in both languages.

## Activity-based mathematics

Encourage your student to work in small groups using skills such as estimation, weighing or measuring. In such activities your new arrival will be exposed to a lot of general English as well as mathematical language. These activities will also promote development of your student's mathematical skills and concepts. Remember that this type of learning may be very new to your student.

## Problem-solving mathematics

Where the interpretation and solving of a problem relies on a good understanding of English you can:

- draw a picture of the problem
- extract the mathematical problem for your student to solve.

## Other good ideas

- Have your student work on mathematical computer programs with a partner.
- Have your student work on a personal mathematics dictionary.
- Language of mathematics booklets are available in some languages from the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre.



## Music

Music and songs are an excellent means of teaching and learning a new language.

Songs will expose your student to large chunks of English presented in an enjoyable non-threatening way. As your student listens and joins in, they will become familiar with the intonation, stress, rhythm and structure of English.

Music sessions are an opportunity for your student to relax from the pressure of intensive learning, so don't pressure your new arrival to join in. Students who are reluctant to join in the singing, may enjoy playing an instrument.

### Strategies and ideas

- Record classroom favourites for your student to take home.
- Whenever songs are taught, make sure your student has a copy of the words. Display the words on charts for all to see, or make individual song books.
- Consider teaching songs from the your student's country of origin – the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre has books and recorded music that can be borrowed.
- Use visuals, such as picture sequences, wall stories or storybooks, to support and explain the content of songs.
- Use songs with
  - lots of repetition in phrases or choruses
  - definite story sequences
  - lots of actions
  - instructions to follow
  - a cumulative structure.



## Enrolment form for new arrivals

**School:** ..... **Date:** / / .....

### Student details

Family name: ..... Sex: .....

Given names: (include pronunciation guide) .....

Date of birth: / / ..... Date of arrival in Australia: / / .....

Address: .....

Postcode: ..... Home telephone: .....

Country of birth: ..... Nationality: .....

Mother's/Guardian's name: .....

Father's/Guardian's name: .....

Father/Guardian's occupation: .....

Mother/Guardian's occupation: .....

Other telephone contact: .....

### Language background

	Language/s spoken	Languages read and written
<b>Father/Guardian:</b>		
<b>Mother/Guardian</b>		
<b>Student</b>		

### Student's educational background

Years of previous schooling: ..... School starting age: .....

Language of previous schooling: .....

Was this the student's first language?  YES  NO

Indicate whether schooling was continuous/interrupted/home tutoring. ....

Year level at time of leaving: .....

Date of last school attendance: .....

Has the student studied English before? .....

When and for how long? .....

.....

.....

### Family information

Resident status (e.g. Refugee, Temporary or Permanent): .....

Other background factors that might affect the student's school life:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Position in family (e.g. 1st. child): .....

Brothers' and/or sisters' names and year levels: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### Social

Friends/relations within the school and the community

.....  
.....  
.....

Student's special interests

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



**No English: Don't panic** provides information and strategies for primary classroom teachers of newly arrived EAL students in their first few weeks in Australia. It provides information about enrolment and placement, helping students settle into the new school, and providing for early English language learning needs. This book seeks to show that the arrival in a school of a student new to English should be viewed as the start of a positive and rewarding time for both teacher and student.